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Attorney General

Joint and Several Liability Reform

The Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association is justifiably concerned with the current joint and several provisions of the Negligence Act which states, “Where damages have been caused or contributed to by the fault or neglect of two or more persons...and, where two or more persons are found at fault or negligent, they are jointly and severally liable to the person suffering the loss or damage...” Because of this, municipalities have often become the targets of litigation when other defendants do not have the means to pay high damage awards.

A recent paper by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario outlines the need for the Ontario Government to reform joint and several liability, with particular regard for the impact it has on ‘deep pocket’ property taxpayers and their communities.

Therefore be it resolved that NOMA supports the Association of Municipalities of Ontario in its efforts to seek joint and several liability reform in Ontario and calls on the Provincial Government to pursue much needed changes to the Negligence Act.

Adopted by the NOMA Board of Directors, June 2010

Adopted by NOMA members April 2013

Action:

Letter to Attorney General, June 8, 2010

Response letter from Attorney General, July 27, 2010

Community & Correctional Services

Action on Abuse of Prescription Drugs

WHEREAS the use and abuse of prescription narcotic drugs has seen a significant and constant increase; and

WHEREAS opiate medication is prescribed by the medical profession for pain management; and,

WHEREAS these drugs are highly addictive; and,

WHEREAS there exists a highly sophisticated and lucrative illicit market for these drugs; and,

WHEREAS to ensure a comprehensive solution, prevention and enforcement should be balanced with education, treatment and harm reduction.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association petition the Ontario Medical Association and the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons to provide ongoing physician support and education to practicing physicians and medical students on best practice prescribing protocol and,

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Ontario Ministry of Health be petitioned to implement an electronic drug program information network (DPIN) as is currently in use in the province of Manitoba; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the Minister of the Attorney General for the Province of Ontario examine legislative changes to more effectively address illicit drug trafficking; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT adequate resources be put in place for prevention and treatment in Northwestern Ontario; and,

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT this resolution be forwarded to the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, the Ministry of Health Promotion and the Local Health Integration Network for their support and action.

Adopted April 2009

Updated and Adopted April 2012

Policing Costs

Whereas the cost of policing in Ontario for contract and non-contract OPP has increased dramatically over the last decade, far exceeding the rate of inflation, and

Whereas the Provincial Government has proposed a wage freeze for provincial employees and municipalities for a two year period, and

Whereas the Provincial Government has recently negotiated a front-loaded 5.075% increase with the OPP with the possibility of a top-up at the termination of the agreement, and

Whereas municipalities must cover nearly two-thirds of policing costs from local taxpayers, and

Whereas northern and rural municipalities have suffered significant economic downturn and dramatic loss of tax revenue.

Therefore be it resolved that the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association call on the Provincial Government, through its Police Services grant in the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF) formula, to cover all increased costs associated with recently negotiated OPP contract, non-contract and municipal police forces for all northern and rural municipalities.

Adopted by the NOMA board: January 14, 2011

Re-adopted April 2014

Action:

Letter to Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, January 25, 2011

Copy to MNDMF & CSCS Ministers

Discussed during in-person meeting with Minister February 28, 2011. Minister indicated that OMPF agreements are in place and will be honoured at those levels.

Discussed with Minister, February 27, 2012. Minister recognized that some of the agreements need to be reviewed to ensure they are suitable to need but highlighted current fiscal issues as an impediment to immediate changes.

Discussed with Minister August 2013, November 2013, February 2014

Education & Training

Ontario Summer Student Programs

WHEREAS the Ontario Government provides funding for employment opportunities for youth; and,

WHEREAS it is in the best interest of municipalities to retain youth through the provision of employment opportunities; and,

WHEREAS it is difficult for municipalities to provide youth employment opportunities without adequate assistance from the Government of Ontario;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association lobby the Government of Ontario to increase the total funding for the Ontario Summer Student employment programs in order to allow more applications to be approved; and

FURTHER THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association lobby the Government of Ontario to increase the funding per position by the same amount as the increases to minimum wage in Ontario, and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the increases be backdated to the first increase in minimum wage after the student subsidy programs were established.

Adopted April 2009

Re-adopted April 2012

Energy & Infrastructure

Debt Retirement Charge on Electrical Invoices Not be Extended Beyond 2018

WHEREAS the Ontario Electricity Financial Corporation forecasts the retirement of the residual stranded debt from the old Ontario Hydro between 2014 and 2018;

AND WHEREAS the Electricity Act, 1998 requires the payment of this residual stranded debt by Ontario's electricity consumers;

AND WHEREAS the residual stranded debt should be continually reduced on an annual basis;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT we ask the assurance of the Ontario Ministry of Energy that the debt retirement charge on the monthly electricity invoices will be removed upon the retirement of the residual stranded debt, and that the timeframe for repayment not be extended beyond 2018.

Adopted April 2009

Re-adopted April 2012

Energy Policy

WHEREAS NOMA has relied on the leadership and knowledge of the Common Voice Northwest Energy Task Force since its creation as a NOMA committee to remain informed on the issues and options related to electricity generation, distribution and transmission and the related regulatory and planning processes; and,

WHEREAS NOMA has partnered with the Town of Atikokan, the City of Thunder Bay, the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce and the Common Voice Northwest Energy Task Force in pressing the Government of Ontario and its energy agencies (the Ontario Power Authority, the Ontario Energy Board, Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation) to create a long term plan for the Northwest in the areas of electrical distribution, transmission and generation; and,

WHEREAS NOMA has identified the following deficiencies in the distribution, transmission and generation system in Northwestern Ontario:

- The radial lines serving Red Lake, Ear Falls, Pickle Lake and Longlac are insufficient in terms of quality of electricity, quantity of electricity and stability
- The 'orange zone' in the Dryden and Thunder Bay areas where there is insufficient capacity to allow new generation to be added to the system
- Insufficient capacity to Red Lake, Pickle Lake and Longlac to facilitate connecting remote First Nations and lack of distribution lines from those points to the remote communities
- Existing 500 MW surplus will disappear by 2016 as all of the mineral exploration projects morph into active mines.
- The need to add additional hydro-electric generation capacity in a timely manner
- The regularity of spring droughts which limit the ability of hydro-electric generation to provide the base needs of the Northwest and require the existing thermal generating stations for more than peaking load.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT NOMA calls on the Government of Ontario to:

- ensure that the long range plan for the Northwest include solutions to deal with the aforementioned deficiencies, and,
- remove the requirement that each project must meet a 'business case' requirement prior to being authorized to proceed and instead fund any projects defined as a 'public good' through general revenue as most of the network throughout Ontario was funded.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT, as a matter of principal, all energy produced in the Northwest should first be used to create additional wealth and employment in the Northwest, and that the Energy Agencies of the Province of Ontario be required to consult directly with NOMA on any and all matters related to system planning and implementation for the region.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the NOMA Board is authorized to intervene where appropriate in any regulatory process related to the provision of electricity services in the Northwest, and that every effort is made to ensure that the cost of intervention is minimized and that the number of participant partners from the Northwest is maximized.

Adopted April 2012

This resolution replaced previous resolutions: Electrical Transmission Planning; NOMA to intervene in Hydro One Networks application; and, Little Jackfish Hydro Electric and transmission projects.

Action:

Meeting with Minister of Energy, June 2010 to outline deficiencies in system

Meeting with Minister of Energy, February 2011 with 5 specific recommendations – no response

Raised in meeting with Minister of MNDMF, August 2011

Meeting with Minister of Energy, February 2012 with 5 specific recommendations

Meeting with Minister of Energy, June 2012

Electrical Costs in Northern Ontario

WHEREAS in the 2010 Budget the Ontario Government has recognized the need for a differential industrial rate for Northern Ontario (Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program (NIERP), following repeated demands from NOMA, NOACC and others, and

WHEREAS the budget also proposed a new permanent Northern Ontario Energy Credit to help eligible low- to middle-income northern residents with the higher energy costs they face, and

WHEREAS these announcements are recognition by the Ontario Government that the north is a region in its own right and should be treated as such, and

WHEREAS these announcements are recognition by the Ontario Government that electrical prices are a problem for industry and consumers in the North, and
WHEREAS while the Energy Credit is permanent the NIERP is only an extension of a 1.9 cent forest industry rebate that is due to run out in the fall of 2010 and the NEIRP is to last until 2013, and

WHEREAS even with the 2 cent per kwh rebate, Ontario still has one of the highest electrical rates in those States and Provinces who are producers of pulp, paper and other wood products, and

WHEREAS the raw ore from the mines of Northern Ontario are at risk at being shipped to other jurisdictions where electrical rates are low for processing and job creation

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that NOMA continues to press the Government of Ontario for a permanent Northern Ontario Industrial Electricity Rate that ensures that the forest and mining industry can be competitive, and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT this resolution be sent to the following:

Premier of Ontario
Minister of Energy and Infrastructure
Minister of Economic Development and Trade
Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry
Ontario Energy Board
Ontario Power Authority
Area MPPs

Adopted April 2010

Re-adopted April 2013

Amendment/Addition to Energy Policy

WHEREAS NOMA has relied on the leadership and knowledge of the Common Voice Northwest Energy Task Force since its creation as a NOMA committee to remain informed on the issues and options related to electricity generation, distribution and transmission and the related regulatory and planning processes; and,

WHEREAS NOMA has partnered with the Town of Atikokan, the City of Thunder Bay, the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce and the Common Voice Northwest Energy Task Force in pressing the Government of Ontario and its energy agencies (the Ontario Power Authority, the Ontario Energy Board, Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation) to create a long term plan for the Northwest in the areas of electrical distribution, transmission and generation; and,

WHEREAS NOMA has identified the following deficiencies in the distribution, transmission and generation system in Northwestern Ontario:

The radial lines serving Red Lake, Ear Falls, Pickle Lake and Longlac are insufficient in terms of quality of electricity, quantity of electricity and stability

The 'orange zone' in the Dryden and Thunder Bay areas where there is insufficient capacity to allow new generation to be added to the system

Insufficient capacity to Red Lake, Pickle Lake and Longlac to facilitate connecting remote First Nations and lack of distribution lines from those points to the remote communities

Existing 500 MW surplus will disappear by 2016 as all of the mineral exploration projects morph into active mines.

The need to add additional hydro-electric generation capacity in a timely manner

The regularity of spring droughts which limit the ability of hydro-electric generation to provide the base needs of the Northwest and require the existing thermal generating stations for more than peaking load.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT NOMA calls on the Government of Ontario to: ensure that the long range plan for the Northwest include solutions to deal with the aforementioned deficiencies, and,

remove the requirement that each project must meet a 'business case' requirement prior to being authorized to proceed and instead fund any projects defined as a 'public good' through general revenue as most of the network throughout Ontario was funded.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT, as a matter of principal, all energy produced in the Northwest should first be used to create additional wealth and employment in the Northwest, and that the Energy Agencies of the Province of Ontario be required to consult directly with NOMA on any and all matters related to system planning and implementation for the region.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the NOMA Board is authorized to intervene where appropriate in any regulatory process related to the provision of electricity services in the Northwest, and that every effort is made to ensure that the cost of intervention is minimized and that the number of participant partners from the Northwest is maximized.

FURTHER THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association urge the Provincial Government to authorize a northwestern Ontario Planning Committee to assist in the long term planning for the energy needs of the region; and

FURTHER THAT the Common Voice Northwest Energy Task Force be considered as the appropriate planning committee for this purpose.

Approved April 2013

Northwestern Ontario's Influence on the Ontario Power Authority's Planning Process and the Ontario Energy Board's Legislative Policy Regarding Regional Electrical Grid Reinforcement

WHEREAS the Ontario Power Authority's planning efforts and the Ontario Energy Board's legislative policy are stalling economic development efforts across Northwestern Ontario; and

WHEREAS much of Northwestern Ontario's current energy transmission and distribution infrastructure has been built to standards of the 1940's and 1950's; and

WHEREAS time is of the essence for many current mining and forestry industry projects which have urgently expressed their immediate need for transmission upgrades and new electrical infrastructure; and

WHEREAS transmission lines that have not been declared "network assets" can only be upgraded or developed if a customer is prepared to pay the entire cost;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association hereby petitions the Minister of Energy to take action immediately to resolve the above-mentioned issues; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association's Energy Task Force be the recognized organization for inducing Provincial Government action; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT new transmission lines be constructed using the 230 KV pre-build technology thus assuring that the line will have the capacity to serve all future end users; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT all existing transmission lines throughout Northwestern Ontario be declared a network asset; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Minister of Energy be called upon to intervene in matters of policy change and where this cannot be done expediently issue Letters of Directives to ensure the immediate, timely construction of new transmission infrastructure with the cost shared amongst all ratepayers.

Adopted April 2014

Support of TransCanada Pipelines Energy East Project

WHEREAS there are 28 NOMA member communities located immediately adjacent to or are divided by CN and CP rail in the Northwest; and

WHEREAS there is a total population of 165,294 people who live in those communities and this number increases with the inclusion of First Nations communities and unincorporated areas; and

WHEREAS the vast majority of the population of the Northwest are exposed on a daily basis to the hundreds of rail cars carrying some form of fossil fuel beside their homes and businesses; and

WHEREAS rail accidents involving cargo of fossil fuels have had devastating results including significant loss of life; and

WHEREAS shipping crude oil by pipeline is a much safer way of transporting such a commodity than by rail car or truck and

WHEREAS the pipeline that TransCanada is proposing to convert from natural gas to crude oil is buried underground throughout its entire length through Northwestern Ontario with the exception of pumping stations, valves etc.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association hereby requests that the National Energy Board (NEB) approve TransCanada Pipelines Energy East Project provided that the following are included:

TransCanada to utilize a state-of-the-art leak detection system which can isolate any section of pipe by remotely closing valves and shutting down pump stations.

Valves to be installed on both sides of significant water crossings to immediately isolate the section of pipe in the unlikely event of a leak.

That TransCanada install double walled pipe with leak detecting devices when passing through significant water crossings and that this double walled pipe would extend 100 meters on either side of the significant waterway.

A comprehensive public consultation on the definition of a 'significant water crossing' be undertaken to by TransCanada Pipelines throughout Northern Ontario prior to the NEB approval.

This system is to have highly trained staff that monitor it 24 hours a day ensure that the pipeline will be shut down at the first sign of a potential problem.
Frequent visual inspection of the pipeline route be completed by TransCanada personnel.

Aerial inspections by TransCanada and industry partners be undertaken, and

The process for verification of the above requirements form part of the NEB decision.

Approved April 2014

Environment

Drinking Water Quality Management System Compliance

WHEREAS the requirement to implement the Drinking Water Quality Management System (DWQMS) is mandated by the Province through the Safe Water Drinking Act, 2002;

AND WHEREAS Ontario Reg. 188/07 legislates the date by which the owner of a waterworks must submit new applications for a Permit to Draw Water, a Drinking Water Works Permit, a Municipal Drinking Water Licence, an Operational Plan for "acceptance" and further mandates that the Owner must also ensure that an accredited Operating Authority is in place;

AND WHEREAS the DWQMS legislates an Operational Plan containing 21 sections of mandatory requirements, including sampling, testing, record keeping, equipment calibration, internal and external audits, management review and continual improvement;

AND WHEREAS the initial cost of implementing (DWQMS), along with the continued cost to maintain and comply with the Legislation, as mandated by the Province, is excessive, and must be recovered by the Municipality exclusively through the water consumers only;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Province establish, and fund, an ongoing program to assist Municipalities in complying with the mandated DWQMS Legislation.

Adopted April 2009

Re-adopted April 2012

Encourage retailers to ban the use of single-use plastic shopping bags

WHEREAS Single Use Plastic Shopping Bags are a very visible component of litter along roadways and at landfill sites throughout the Districts of Rainy River, Kenora and Thunder Bay; and

WHEREAS Single Use Plastic Shopping Bags have a negative impact on wildlife habitat and are not environmentally friendly; and

WHEREAS Municipalities and First Nations of the Districts of Rainy River, Kenora and Thunder Bay incur significant costs to clean up Single Use Plastic Shopping Bags each year; and

WHEREAS local businesses can reduce merchandise cost by not having to purchase Single Use Plastic Shopping Bags; and

WHEREAS the public is aware of the environmental advantages and reduced cost of using reusable shopping bags; and

WHEREAS by using multi-use shopping bags, District residents become actively involved in environmental stewardship.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association encourages each and every Municipality and First Nations within the geographical boundaries of the Districts of Rainy River, Kenora and Thunder Bay to adopt a resolution whereby retailers are asked to cooperate in discontinuing the provision of plastic shopping bags that are intended for single use.

Adopted April 2012

Emergency Preparedness

WHEREAS unpredictable extreme weather events are occurring with increasing frequency, recently resulting in power outages in five provinces, including three major Ontario cities for extended periods of time contributing to loss of life, significant property damage, and millions of dollars in unbudgeted costs to municipalities; and

WHEREAS the risk to citizens and to community economic well-being due to extreme weather events in winter months in sub-arctic locations greatly exceeds the risks in temperate climates; and

WHEREAS the response to weather emergencies rests largely with the humanpower and financial resources of municipalities;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association work with the provincial government to enhance weather-related disaster readiness and response strategies geared to Northern climates and that this strategy include emergency readiness education for the general public; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the action items in the provincial document “Climate Ready, Ontario’s Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan 2011-2014” highlighting the need for special attention to Northern Ontario with respect to adaptation to climate change and enhanced emergency measures be implemented forthwith.

Adopted April 2014

Finance

Increase the heads and beds payment in lieu of taxes effective January 1, 2012

WHEREAS in 1970 the rate of provincial payments in lieu of taxes for universities was arbitrarily set at \$25 per full time student; and

WHEREAS in 1973 the rate was doubled to \$50 per student and the payment was expanded to include hospitals and provincial correctional institutions; and

WHEREAS in 1987 the rate was again increased by 50%, still without apparent justification, to \$75 per student and bed; and

WHEREAS that rate as revised in 1987 has remained constant since that time despite the fact that inflation would in 2012 require almost doubling the payment (\$146); and WHEREAS at least sixty-five communities have called for an increase in payments; and

WHEREAS heads of universities are supporting that call; and

WHEREAS Premier McGuinty has looked to the municipalities of the province to be the economic engine of Ontario; and

WHEREAS the payments in lieu of taxes do not meet the actual costs of municipalities to provide the necessary services for these various institutions, thus placing an unfair tax burden on their property tax payers, consequently jeopardizing these municipalities' ability to meet infrastructure demands, and weakening their ability to act as economic engines;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association calls on the government of the Province of Ontario to, effective January 1, 2012, increase the payments in lieu of taxes; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association calls on the Province of Ontario to meet with the host municipalities for the purpose of reviewing the basis for payments in lieu of taxes, and determining a stable foundation going forward for those payments that meets associated costs prior to the 2013 budget cycle; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that copies of this motion be forwarded to: Premier Dalton McGuinty; the Honourable Dwight Duncan, Minister of Finance; Sarah Campbell, MPP for Kenora - Rainy River; Hon. Michael Gravelle, MPP for Thunder Bay- Superior North; Bill Mauro, MPP for Thunder Bay- Atikokan; the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO); the Ontario Municipal Taxation and Revenue Association (OMTRA) [formerly the Association of Municipal Tax Collectors of Ontario (AMTCO)], and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). **Approved April 2012**

Property Lienholder Status

WHEREAS Northern and Rural municipalities characteristically do not have diversified economies and are typically one industry towns; and

WHEREAS Northern and Rural municipalities have suffered a significant economic downturn and dramatic losses of tax revenue; and

WHEREAS the population has been on the decline in many small Northern and Rural municipalities for a number of years, resulting in a corresponding declining tax base; and

WHEREAS property values in small Northern and Rural municipalities have been on the decline rather than increasing in value similar to Southern Ontario, resulting in higher tax levies; and

WHEREAS many properties that are in arrears have outstanding liens securing amounts owing to the provincial and federal governments; and

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario has enacted amendments to the Municipal Act to provide:

- that the Municipality can vest tax sale properties free and clear of the Provincial lien;
- that the lien is waived on subsequent sales to third parties where the cancellation price is less than \$10,000.00 or where the sale takes place seven years or more after the registration of the notice of vesting; and
- that when not waived, the proceeds of subsequent sales are shared with the Municipality pursuant to a statutory formula rather than giving the Province first priority to claim against them;

AND WHEREAS no similar relief has been provided in respect of Federal liens;

AND WHEREAS, as a result, the existence of the Federal lien frustrates the tax sale process to the disadvantage of both Municipality and the Federal government itself and results in tax write offs and abandoned properties;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association urge the Government of Canada to provide relief in respect of its liens at least to the same extent as the Province of Ontario has done.

Adopted by the membership: April 2011
Re-adopted April 2014

Property Tax Model – Arrears/Sale Model

WHEREAS Northern and Rural municipalities characteristically do not have diversified economies and are typically one industry towns; and

WHEREAS Northern and Rural municipalities have suffered a significant economic downturn and dramatic losses of tax revenue; and

WHEREAS the population has been on the decline in many small Northern and Rural municipalities for a number of years, resulting in a corresponding declining tax base; and

WHEREAS, in contrast to Southern Ontario, property values in small Northern and Rural municipalities have been on the decline rather than increasing in value, resulting in higher tax levies; and

WHEREAS many properties that are in tax arrears end up becoming derelict and unsaleable through tax sale procedures due to the amount of time required to pass prior to tax sale; and

WHEREAS many properties hold no value and are not practical to be vested in the municipality following an unsuccessful tax sale process due to lack of maintenance, vandalism, environmental or climactic damage.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association call on the Provincial Government, through changes in tax arrears legislation, to reduce this gap in the system that allows properties to sit so long in arrears and fall into disrepair resulting in the erosion of desperately needed taxation revenue and perpetuating vacant, decaying communities;

AND FURTHER THAT the Provincial Government make changes to legislation governing the tax sale process so as to limit the arrears period to two years instead of three, especially in the case of commercial properties;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Premier, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing and all Northwestern Ontario MPP's for their action and support.

Adopted by the membership: April 2011

Re-adopted April 2014

Municipal Property Assessment Corporation & Assessment Review Board

Recent decisions by the Assessment Review Board relating to large industrial properties across Northern Ontario have resulted in a significant financial burden to numerous municipalities through both future loss of tax revenues and, in some cases, required reimbursement of previous taxes paid.

The issue under dispute is the interpretation and definition of “External Obsolescence” in calculating assessed value. There appears to be a general lack of clarity regarding the scope of External Obsolescence and its application to assessments by the Assessment Review Board (ARB).

Legal Counsel for one of the Municipalities involved in the ARB proceeding provided the following definition, “External Obsolescence (EO) is generally understood in Canadian assessment literature as being due to long-term, incurable localized factors that are beyond general varying costs of doing business and the control of the taxpayer, which render a proportion of the value of the buildings utilized permanently obsolete. While EO may include considerations of source supply, customer base changes, market conditions and competition, these facts must be substantiated by admissible, relevant evidence demonstrating that they are long-term, incurable and uniquely related to the property in question and hence, the value of the industrial buildings.”

The lack of clarity regarding External Obsolescence is costing municipalities across Northern Ontario millions of dollars and cannot be allowed to continue. It is vital that the Minister of Finance intercede to stay the decisions of the ARB that utilize the current unclear definitions of External Obsolescence and proceed to create regulations under the Assessment Act that detail how current value is assessed with clear definition of the use of External Obsolescence.

Therefore be it resolved that the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association call on the Minister of Finance to:

Stay current decisions of the ARB that utilize External Obsolescence in calculating assessments;
and

Create regulations under the Assessment Act that provide clear definition of the use of External Obsolescence.

Adopted April 2013

Sale of Crown Lands to Municipalities

WHEREAS municipalities are the closest order of government to the citizenry; and

WHEREAS municipalities have the responsibility to undertake land-use planning to promote and manage growth in their in their respective communities; and

WHEREAS the Government of Ontario uses fair-market-value assessments for determining the cost of land which the Crown may release to municipalities;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association lobby the Government of Ontario to remove the “fair-market-value” assessment system and revert back to charging only an administrative fee when releasing Crown lands to municipalities in order to reduce the excessive financial burden fair-market-value assessments imposed on municipalities which are attempting to plan for and manage growth.

Adopted April 2014

Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC)

WHEREAS the services provided by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) are not being completed in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS the delay to receive new construction assessment results in a negative financial impact on the member municipalities of the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association; and

WHEREAS the delay to receive new construction assessment results in a hardship to the affected taxpayer, who is faced with paying up to three years of tax assessment in one year; and

WHEREAS the number of Requests for Reconsideration in 2013 indicate that MPAC have assessed many properties in error; and

WHEREAS the guidelines for inspections for the Requests for Reconsideration need to be reviewed to ensure fairness in all property assessment, in particular residential and commercial inspections;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association hereby petitions the Ministry of Finance to ensure that the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation forthwith reviews and improves its practices and procedures with regards to new construction assessment and inspections of its properties to ensure that they be fair and efficient; and

THAT municipalities be provided with an opportunity to make submissions with respect to such changes.

Adopted April 2014

Health & Long-term Care

Revision to the long-term care funding formula for homes for the aged

The Provincial Government, as represented by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, maintains a funding formula in order to allocate funding to Homes for the Aged. Municipalities believe that this funding formula needs to be reviewed and revised to increase equity between municipalities and unincorporated areas.

The Township of Ear Falls is concerned with this issue because of its significant impact on the district's collective capacity to maintain high quality, adequately funded Long-Term Care services to residents in a manner that recognizes municipalities' limited financial capacity.

WHEREAS the Provincial Government, as represented by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, maintains a funding formula in order to allocate funding to Homes for the Aged in accordance with Section 90 (1) of the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, S.O. 2007, Chapter 8; and

WHEREAS the current funding formula does not recognize or allow for the higher costs of doing business in Northwestern Ontario; and

WHEREAS the current funding formula should include a component based on unincorporated area property assessments; and

WHEREAS other social services including District Social Service Boards and Public Health Boards are able to levy funds based on both municipal and unincorporated property assessments; and

WHEREAS Homes for the Aged, District Social Service Boards and Public Health Boards provide services to the public without regard to whether residents are from organized municipalities or unincorporated areas;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association urge the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to review and revise the Long-Term Care Funding formula for Homes for the Aged to include a component based on unincorporated area property assessments.

Adopted April 2012

Physician/Health Care Professional Shortage

WHEREAS the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association hereby recognizes that some of its member communities are in a crisis situation regarding the availability of physicians; and,

WHEREAS all Northern Communities do not have sufficient Physicians and other Health Care Providers to ensure that our citizens receive adequate Health Care Coverage.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association petition the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Northwestern Local Health Integration Network to provide assistance and solutions to this crisis.

Adopted April 2009

Updated and re-adopted April 2012

Non-urgent Patient Transportation

WHEREAS non-urgent Patient Transportation concerns have become increasingly frustrating and expensive for municipalities, and

WHEREAS Municipalities in the Northwest, either directly or indirectly through their DSSABs, are currently directing and funding Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to provide emergency service that aligns with police and fire services, and

WHEREAS each time a non-urgent transfer request is filled there is a compromise in the ability of EMS to provide emergency service, and

WHEREAS in many of the smaller rural communities, there is only one ambulance at any given time, and

WHEREAS currently a staffed ambulance is leaving the municipality for hours, even a day at a time to deliver non-urgent patients - leaving the municipality without mandated EMS vehicle and paramedic staff which multiplies risk, liability and cost to the municipality, and

WHEREAS in many of these cases, an ambulance that is in transit with a non-urgent patient will be called back to the community to assist with an emergency, leading to significant delays for the emergency patient, and often leaving the non-urgent patient stranded, and

WHEREAS the provision of non-urgent transportation by EMS is not only highly inefficient and ineffective, but also unreliable, causing frustration on all sides, and

WHEREAS in some of our communities as much as 50% of their emergency service funds are being used to provide non-urgent transfers, and

WHEREAS this is unacceptable and unaffordable,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that NOMA call on the Government of Ontario to work with NOMA to develop and provide support for programs that would focus on non-emergency transportation, and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT this resolution be sent to the following:

Premier of Ontario
Minister of Health for Ontario
Northwest LHIN
NOSDA
N.W.O. DSSAB's and EMS providers
Area MPPs

Adopted April 2010

Re-adopted April 2013

Action:

Meeting with Minister of Health in February 2010, August 2010, February 2011 and February 2012, February 2015

CHANGES TO PATIENT ENROLLMENT MODELS

Whereas in Northern rural and remote communities Family Practice physician recruitment and retention has been challenging for years; and

Whereas communities must often compete with one another and with the more urban communities in southern Ontario in recruiting and retaining physicians; and

Whereas the new “rules” around signing physicians to PEMS (Patient Enrollment Models) has further disadvantaged “northern communities” (20 physicians on first-come-first-served basis and 20 physicians prioritized by local need); and

Whereas northern communities that have been successful in recruiting Family Practice physicians to their communities are experiencing long delays in receiving approvals for physicians to sign up to Family Health Networks/Family Health Organizations; and

Whereas these delays will significantly and negatively impact upon the ability of Northwestern Ontario communities to recruit Family Practice physicians and the rostering of unattached patients.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association call upon the Provincial government, specifically the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, to expedite the approval of applications for the enrollment of Family Practice Physicians into Patient Enrollment Models for Northern communities.

Approved April 2013

Municipal Affairs & Housing

Affordable Seniors Housing

Affordable housing is in high demand in Municipalities. Seniors, specifically, are finding it increasingly difficult to remain in their homes due to fixed incomes and increasing expenses. In addition, high rental rates make it difficult for seniors to maintain rental units, forcing many seniors to leave the community in search of affordable housing.

Further, municipalities are experiencing extreme shortages in assisted living units and long term care beds. This situation also contributes to seniors leaving the community and being separated from family and friends.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association petitions the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care to assist municipalities in addressing the issues of affordable seniors housing, senior assisted living housing and long term care beds in order to ensure our seniors are able to remain and thrive in our communities.

Adopted April 2012

Grants to Municipalities

WHEREAS the majority of municipalities in the North have experienced a significant decline in their assessment, primarily due to the crisis in the forest industry, and

WHEREAS the current OMPF and the Mitigation Fund are important aspects of the financial integrity of Northern Municipalities, and

WHEREAS it is essential that the two programs remain in place for Northern Municipalities, and

WHEREAS the Northern Communities Grant, currently providing \$235 per household is inadequate to meet the needs of our municipal governments,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that NOMA requests that the Government of Ontario

1. Retain the OMPF and Mitigation Fund, and
2. Increase the Northern Communities Grant by \$75 per household, and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT this resolution be sent to the following:

Premier of Ontario
Minister of Finance for Ontario
Minister of Municipal Affairs for Ontario
Area MPPs

Adopted April 2010

Re-adopted April 2013

Action:

Raised during meeting with Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Northern Development, Mines & Forestry in August 2010, February 2011, August 2011, August 2013

Province to assume 100% cost of Farm Tax Rebate, the Management Forest Tax Incentive, and Conservation Land Tax Incentive Programs

WHEREAS from time to time the Province of Ontario institutes programs and incentives, such as the Farm Tax Rebate Program, the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program and the Conservation Land Tax Program to meet its objectives;

AND WHEREAS the preservation of conservation lands or farm lands by these programs serve the good of the region and province and not just the local municipality;

AND WHEREAS under the Farm Tax Rebate Program and the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program the cost to the local municipality is 75% of the taxes on each eligible property and under the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program the cost to the local municipality is 100% of the taxes including 100% of the assessments under the Municipal Drainage Act;

AND WHEREAS it is unfair and unreasonable that the local municipality should shoulder the burden of the cost of programs that serve the region and the province;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association request that the Province of Ontario assume the 100% cost of the Farm Tax Rebate Program, the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program and the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program;

AND FURTHER THAT Section 61(5) of the Drainage Act R.S.O. 1990 C D17 be amended to ensure that drainage assessments for a municipal drain on Conservation Land be paid by either the property owner or the Province;

AND FURTHER THAT the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF) be adjusted on an annual basis to ensure that the true cost of these provincial programs and incentives be paid for by the Province.

Adopted April 2009

Re-adopted April 2012

Action:

Raised during meeting with Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, August 2011. No fiscal capacity. Provincial Municipal Financial Services Review put priority with issues of broader impact such as upload of services.

Province to Pay for MPAC Services

WHEREAS the work of the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) provides services to both Municipal governments and the Provincial government for the purpose of collecting property taxes;

AND WHEREAS Ontario Municipalities pay for MPAC services and costs and the Province does not;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association requests that the Province of Ontario pay a proportional share of MPAC costs related to education and property taxes.

Adopted April 2009

Re-adopted April 2012

Special fund to assist small remote communities with staff training costs

WHEREAS Municipal staff must stay current with regulations, legislation, and best practices;
and

WHEREAS most Municipal training, seminars, and workshops for Northwest Ontario are offered
in Thunder Bay; and

WHEREAS the travel time to Thunder Bay from Northwest Municipalities ranges from 1 hour to
8 hours; and

WHEREAS the traveling Municipalities must pay for travel, meals, and accommodations in
addition to the cost of the training;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association
request the Province of Ontario to create a special fund to assist small remote communities
with staff training costs.

Adopted April 2012

Crown to Provide Payment in Lieu of Municipal Land Tax at Fair Market Value

A large area of urban and rural land within the boundaries of Municipalities is Provincial Crown land and is not subject to Municipal Land Tax. Much of this land is highly developable and if released, would provide Municipalities the opportunity to provide essential services at a fair and equitable cost to the ratepayers. Alternately, if the Crown paid taxes at the fair market value, the Municipalities' tax bases would be increased, providing the opportunity to provide the current level of services at a lower cost to ratepayers.

Current grants-in-lieu provided by the Province of Ontario do not adequately reflect the cost incurred by municipalities to provide services.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association petitions the Provincial Government to pay municipalities' municipal land tax based on fair market value as determined by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation for Crown lands located within the Municipal boundaries.

Adopted April 2012

***Request Province of Ontario to Upload the Full Cost of Court Security
Prisoner Transport Immediately in 2012 for all Municipalities of 16,000 or
Less Population***

WHEREAS the Ontario Government announced it would upload the costs of court security and prisoner transport (CSPT) as part of the 2008 Ontario Budget; and

WHEREAS the upload of CSPT costs will be phased in from 2012 to 2018; and

WHEREAS the cost of policing in small Municipalities is a large financial burden;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association request the Province of Ontario to upload the full cost of Court Security Prisoner Transport (CSPT) as of January 1, 2012 for all Municipalities with a population of 16,000 or less.

Adopted April 2012

Funding Parity within the Developmental Services System

The Provincial Government, as represented by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is responsible for funding the delivery of the Developmental Services System in Ontario. Community service organizations, such as the Harmony Centre for Community Living in Red Lake, deliver services to adults with developmental disabilities. Services are provided through Client Service Coordination, Vocational and Life Skills Programs which aim to provide emotional and social support, job training, and independent living skills.

The Provincial Government is requested to review the methodology for funding delivery to ensure that adequate and comparable levels of service are provided across Ontario as individual assessments for services has resulted in an inconsistent application of funding.

The KDMA is concerned with this issue because of its impact on the service providers' capacity to provide services to adults with developmental disabilities in the region.

WHEREAS the Developmental Services System in Ontario provides support for adults with developmental disabilities; and

WHEREAS service facilities that provide Developmental Services, such as the Harmony Centre for Community Living in Red Lake, receive funding through the Ministry of Community and Social Services for program delivery and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for facility maintenance; and

WHEREAS the methodology for individual assessments for services has varied province wide leading to an inconsistent application of funding for program delivery; and

WHEREAS current regional facilities are at full capacity and funds are not available for development of new living facilities; and

WHEREAS regional facilities do not have adequate resources or capacity to provide support to adults in Northwestern Ontario with developmental disabilities;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association urge the Provincial Government to review the provincial funding model for Developmental Services System to ensure that adequate and comparable levels of service are provided across Ontario.

Adopted April 2013

Natural Resources

Trails and Canoe Routes

WHEREAS there is a rich legacy of traditional canoe routes connecting many of the waters of Northwestern Ontario; and,

WHEREAS a network of trails of various sophistication also connects many parts of the region; and,

WHEREAS these trails have nearly become lost due to neglect and forestry operations; and,

WHEREAS these trails and routes are being restored by volunteers, canoe enthusiasts, mountain bike enthusiasts, geocaching enthusiasts, and nature enthusiasts; and,

WHEREAS this legacy of access to our wilderness is an important quality of life issue to us all, and represents economic development in terms of attraction to experiential tourists; and,

WHEREAS these volunteer efforts need and deserve support and recognition.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association support the preservation and enhancement of our legacy of canoe routes and wilderness trails; and,

Further that NOMA petition the Ministry of Natural Resources to support this effort by requiring forestry operators to recognize and respect these routes so they are not destroyed by logging operations; by providing mapping assistance to promote this resource; by providing financial assistance and logistical support to the volunteers involved in this work; and by extending to all of Northwestern Ontario, the exception which allows camping on crown land in MNR green zones by canoers and kayakers, presently only existing in MNR's Atikokan District.

Adopted April 2012

Disposition of Crown Lands in Ontario

WHEREAS there are opportunities for tourism and recreational development on waterfront Crown lands both within and outside of municipal boundaries.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association call on the Provincial Government to foster economic development by liberalizing its Northwestern Ontario land tenure policies as they apply to Crown Lands, including areas outside present municipal boundaries, and in particular make Crown Land in the surveyed townships available to the public at market value.

Adopted April 2009

Updated and re-adopted April 2012

Endangered Species Act

WHEREAS in 2007, the Government of Ontario passed the Endangered Species Act, and

WHEREAS in addition to species protection, the ESA 2007 prohibits damage or destruction of habitat for species at risk (those listed as endangered or threatened on the Species at Risk in Ontario (SARO) List), and

WHEREAS when a species is placed on the Species at Risk in Ontario list its general habitat is automatically protected from damage or destruction and the Ministry of Natural Resources then develops a species-specific Habitat Regulation, which is the legal description of a species habitat that is protected under the Act, and

WHEREAS proponents of the forest industry have expressed significant concern with the unnecessary and costly duplication that the habitat regulation permit process represents, and

WHEREAS all harvesting on Crown land in Ontario is strictly regulated by the Government of Ontario under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA) which has been in place since 1994 and requires “that Forest Management Plans (FMPs) identify threatened and endangered species as “featured species” and provide for their protection within the area covered by the plan. Forest Management Plans (FMPs) provide a proven, effective and efficient means of providing for species at risk

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association call on the Government of Ontario to implement a long term regulation under section 55 (1)(b) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) which recognizes that the primary objectives of the ESA are met through the Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA) and its required Forest Management Plans (FMPs), and, further, fulfills government’s commitment to recognize the CFSA and FMPs as equivalent processes to the ESA with respect to planning for and providing for species at risk, and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT this resolution be sent to the following:

Premier of Ontario
Minister of Natural Resources
Minister of Economic Development and Trade
Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry
Minister of Government Services
Area MPPs

Adopted by Board, March 2010, Adopted by Membership, April 2010, Re-adopted April 2013

Action:

Discussed with Minister of Natural Resources, February 2010, August 2010, February 2011, August 2011.

Forest Tenure Reform

WHEREAS the Ontario Ministry of Northern Development Mines and Forestry has released a proposed framework with the aim of modernizing Ontario's forest tenure and pricing system;

AND WHEREAS NOMA speaks for the interests of all Northwestern Ontario municipalities, many who have already taken the opportunity to provide a diverse range of feedback on this Forest Tenure reform.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association calls upon the province to ensure that any reforms adhere to the following principles.

- Accommodate the business needs of the existing operating users both large and small, review the business plans of the dormant ones who are waiting for the market to return in order to restart their facilities, and encourage new entrants, particularly value added in order to protect the existing job base and encourage new job creation in the forestry sector.
- Encourage fuller use of the forestry resources and promote the sustainability of the harvest.
- Reduce government bureaucracy in order to obtain and retain greater competitiveness with those outside Ontario.
- Permanent protection of Ontario's 26 million cubic meters of sustainable industrial fibre
- Move quickly to clarify the considerable ambiguity around the existing proposals in order to stabilize future forest sector investments.

Adopted by the Board, June 2010

Updated & adopted by the membership: April 2011

Re-adopted April 2014

Action:

Letter to Minister of Northern Development, Mines & Forestry, May 2011

Forest Tenure Reform (2)

WHEREAS in 2011, the Government of Ontario passed the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act; and

WHEREAS there is support from municipalities and the forest industry for a natural, common sense progression towards moderate and measured tenure reform that recognizes local circumstances; and

WHEREAS NOMA has expressed concerns in a July 2011 letter to the Premier regarding the Government of Ontario's experimental approach to tenure reform; and

WHEREAS the Government of Ontario has made it clear that it wishes to have the majority of Crown forests managed by Enhanced Shareholder SFLs and in 2011 developed a Forest Industry Working Group (FIWG), a Community Working Group (CWG) and a First Nations Working Group (FNWG) to address this objective in a pragmatic and collaborative manner; and

WHEREAS the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) has ignored the input of the various working groups and recently developed a unilateral approach to tenure reform that is inconsistent with previous Government of Ontario commitments, including statements made by the current Minister of Natural Resources and the Premier of Ontario; and

WHEREAS the FIWG, the CWG and the FNWG can no longer work in silos; and

WHEREAS the unilateral approach proposed by MNR will result in increased costs to the forest sector; will create business uncertainty that will jeopardize future investment and employment opportunities; and will jeopardize the future economic viability of forest dependent communities.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association call on the Ministry of Natural Resources to reorganize the FIWG, CWG and FNWG into a single committee with clear Terms of Reference, and

FURTHER THAT the MNR immediately cease the development and implementation of its unilateral approach to tenure reform.

Adopted April 2012

Northern Development & Mines

Support for Ferrochrome Processor

Whereas the proposed Northwestern Ontario locations for a ferrochrome processor have led to the development of partnerships between municipalities and First Nations communities; and,

WHEREAS the construction of a ferrochrome processor in Northwestern Ontario will create construction jobs and economic spin-offs that will positively impact the entire region; and,

WHEREAS the operation of a ferrochrome processor in the region will provide long-term jobs and encourage economic development.

Resolution

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association express its support for the construction and operation of a ferrochrome processor at Exton in the municipality of Greenstone.

Adopted April 2012

Action:

May 2012: Cliffs Natural Resources announced Sudbury as location for ferrochrome processor

Creation of Northern Committee of the Legislative Assembly

On March 1, 2012, the following motion was debated and carried in the Legislative Assembly.

That, in the opinion of this House, a committee of the Legislative Assembly, with authority to meet at the call of the Chair, should be established as follows;

That the membership of the committee be comprised of every member of the Legislative Assembly whose electoral district lies north of the French River; and

That the committee be empowered to consider and report to the House its observations, opinions and recommendations on all policies and legislation of the province that directly impact Northern Ontario; and

To which any bills whose principal focus and impact affect Northern Ontario may be referred.

That NOMA support the creation of the Northern Committee of the Legislative Assembly.

Adopted by the NOMA Board, March 2012

Action:

Letter of support to John Vanthof, MPP, Timiskaming-Cochrane with copy to all MPP's and FONOM.

Ontario Fire College Subsidy

WHEREAS Northwestern Ontario fire departments have to incur additional costs for meals, accommodations and travel when attending courses at the Ontario Fire College's Northern Campus due to the remoteness of our communities; and

WHEREAS the College provides accommodations, meals and a travel subsidy for students attending courses in Gravenhurst; and,

WHEREAS the Thunder Bay District Zone One Mutual Aid Association, on a regular basis since the inception of the Northern Campus in 2001, has requested that a subsidy be provided to Northwestern Ontario fire departments and a decision regarding the request has yet to be made by the College.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association requests that the Ontario Fire College act immediately to provide Northwestern Ontario fire departments with meals, accommodations and a subsidy for travel when attending Ontario Fire College courses at the Northern Campus;

AND FURTHER THAT this resolution be forwarded to all Northwestern Ontario MPP's for their support.

Adopted by the membership: April 2011

Re-adopted April 2014

Government Services in the Northwest

WHEREAS the Northwest does not currently have access to some Ontario Government departments through a local office, and

WHEREAS the absence of these services is a hindrance to our success, and

WHEREAS NOMA has identified two Departments that are required to assist with local issues:

Aboriginal Affairs

With a growing urban Aboriginal population in many communities across Northwestern Ontario, the Government of Ontario needs to not only recognize this phenomenon but also to outline specific actions that address the needs of the Urban Aboriginal communities. A good first step would be the establishment of an office of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in the Northwest as recommended by Dr. Rosehart in the Northwestern Economic Facilitator's Report.

Economic Development & Trade

A central theme of the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario must be one of attracting investment and growth to Northern Ontario, yet the Government does not currently provide services and programs of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade to Northern Ontario. We believe that this is an oversight that must be rectified and are calling on the Government to establish an MEDT office in the Northwest.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that NOMA call on the Government of Ontario to establish an office of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in the Northwest, and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that NOMA call on the Government of Ontario to establish an office of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade in the Northwest, and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT this resolution be sent to the following:

Premier of Ontario
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs
Minister of Economic Development and Trade
Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry
Area MPPs

Adopted April 2010

Re-adopted April 2013

Mining Development – The Role of the Ontario Government

Northwestern Ontario needs to be supported in its bid for the development of a strong and diverse economy through the Province taking the leadership in planning, developing and owning the infrastructure necessary to support the Ring of Fire development and any other mining venture to be located in the Northwest.

Because of the numerous discoveries and mining companies involved, the Northwest Ring of Fire is a unique development in Ontario. As such, it requires a more planned public approach than what has occurred in past and what we believe is currently underway.

There are three key factors that should drive this development being managed for the public good rather than by the private interest:

Governments, not corporations, have the legal duty to consult and accommodate according to the Supreme Court of Canada;

There is currently a multitude of owners of numerous individual mines that are likely to come on stream over the next 10 to 30 years, each with its own independent and unique need for transportation and energy; and

There are a number of remote First Nation communities whose traditional territory is in close proximity to the Ring of Fire development area – these communities require road and electrical infrastructure to meet their own economic and social needs.

The Government of Ontario should be the organization taking the lead in determining the infrastructure requirements of the Northwest Ring of Fire and the adjacent communities (including the municipalities of Greenstone and Pickle Lake), securing the route for any proposed infrastructure corridor(s) and coordinating the construction of said infrastructure.

In addition, while a North-South corridor connecting the Northwest Ring of Fire to the municipality of Greenstone is a requirement of any public plan, there is also a requirement for an East-West transportation and utility corridor connecting the Northwest Ring of Fire to the Township of Pickle Lake. While the North-South link is a logical one for the ease of connection to CN's Northern Rail Line for the movement of heavy haul ore and for access to and from the mines by those who need to be there, the East-West link also provides for alternate access to and from the site. It also maintains and expands the opportunity for the remote First Nation communities and municipalities to the west to provide labour, goods and services to the Ring of Fire development.

We recognize that the construction of the necessary transportation and energy infrastructure will be an expensive proposition. However, the provincial tax revenue from the Northwest Ring of Fire development over its expected life of 100+ years will be beyond comprehension. The return on Ontario's investment will be significant.

That being said, modern technology would allow for the Province to recover its initial capital outlay in building the road and/or rail infrastructure through the use of an electronic toll system that would charge back the cost per tonne/km for the ore and materials utilizing the road/rail system.

It is the Government's job to make this happen, not the private sector. The auto industry has historically received billions in government investment to support its growth and economic development. The mining industry now needs similar support through infrastructure investments that will drive the economy for decades to come.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association call on the Government of Ontario, in conjunction with the Government of Canada, to take the leadership in planning, developing and owning the infrastructure necessary to support the Northwest Ring of Fire development and any other mining venture to be located in the Northwest; and

Further that NOMA advocate for the construction of both:

A North-South transportation and utility corridor connecting the Northwest Ring of Fire to the Municipality of Greenstone; and

An East-West transportation and utility corridor connecting the Northwest Ring of Fire to the Township of Pickle Lake.

Adopted April 2013

Tourism & Culture

Closure of Travel Information Centres

WHEREAS the announcement of the closure of the Kenora, Rainy River and Fort Frances Travel Information Centres in the 2012 Ontario Budget will leave a busy tourist area completely void of the visitor information centres that are vital to providing visitors with the information they need to extend their stay and increase their spending – both of which are essential principles outlined within the Discovering Ontario report; and,

WHEREAS This decision comes on the heels of an earlier decision to reduce the funding to Municipally operated tourist information centres across the North. That resulted in fewer centres being available to assist the travelling public in learning what to see and where to go as they travel through this vast and magnificent land;

WHEREAS a meeting has been requested between the Minister of Tourism Michael Chan, Mr. Ronald Holgerson of OTMPC, and the sub regional board members of Northern Ontario RTO 13 and Sunset Country and the North of Superior Travel Association; and,

WHEREAS we believe that such a meeting is vital in order to review the impacts of the decision and collaborate on constructive and productive solutions to ensure that visitors to Northwestern Ontario have the information they require to extend and enjoy their time in our great region

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association call on the Government of Ontario to reverse their decision to close these Travel Information Centres in order to ensure that the Fort Frances, Rainy River and Kenora Travel Centres will be open throughout summer 2012.

Adopted April 2012

Transportation

TransCanada Highway Improvements

WHEREAS the TransCanada highway is an increasingly important part of our Northern Ontario economic base, and improvements which increase traffic volume on the highway have positive economic development outcomes;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT NOMA petitions the Province of Ontario to take the following steps to reduce the leakage of trans-national traffic to United States highway routes:

- Recognize our long distances by raising the speed limit on all our highways by 10 km per hour, making it more consistent with other jurisdictions;
- Provide more scenic pullouts, more public washrooms and garbage receptacles at all pullouts;
- Provide wide, obstacle-free, gently sloping verges, where practical, in all highway reconstruction projects, to reduce the severity of off-the-road incidents and wild animal encounters;
- Incorporate four lane divided highways as the standard design for at least part of the highway maintenance/replacement program; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded the Minister of Transportation, the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, to all Northwestern Ontario municipalities, the Northwestern Ontario Chamber of Commerce, Common Voice Northwest, and regional MPPs for support.

Adopted April 2010

Re-adopted April 2013

Action:

Discussed with Minister of Transportation, August 2010 and February 2011, February 2014, August 2014.

Pedestrian Safety Crossing Provincial Highways

WHEREAS the majority of communities in the Northwest have Provincial Highways cutting through their urban areas; and

WHEREAS Municipalities require and fund a higher standard for pedestrian crossings on major municipal roads than the Province requires of its highways that cross through urban areas; and

WHEREAS pedestrian safety is a high priority for the people of Northwestern Ontario.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that NOMA urge the Government of Ontario to adopt appropriate safety standards for pedestrian crossings of major arteries, and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that NOMA distribute this resolution to the Minister of Transportation, the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, area MPPs, Member Municipalities with a request for support.

Adopted April 2010

Re-adopted April 2013

Action:

Specific to City of Thunder Bay. NOMA is supportive of their views but will allow them to lobby regarding their particular needs.

Twinning of the TransCanada Highway (Kenora to Manitoba)

WHEREAS the twinning of the TransCanada Highway from the Kenora By-Pass to the Manitoba Border is imperative for the growth of the economy of the Kenora District and the rest of Northwestern Ontario; and,

WHEREAS the first 15 kilometres from Shoal Lake to the Border must start sooner rather than later so as to increase both trade and safety.

Resolution

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association urge that both the Federal Government and the Provincial Government move this project ahead immediately.

Adopted by the membership: April 2011

Re-Adopted April 2014

Ministry of Transportation Highway Maintenance

WHEREAS road closures and accidents have increased in the region represented by the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association during the 2013/14 winter season; and

WHEREAS the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) highway maintenance services are completed by MTO contractor; and

WHEREAS the MTO contractor may be meeting the minimal standards but not meeting the requirements and expectations of users of the highways in the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association region; and

WHEREAS municipalities belonging to the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association have similar concerns with road closures and accidents; and

WHEREAS school buses are refusing to transport students to schools on certain highways within the region;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association hereby petitions the Minister of Transportation to take action to ensure the performance standards required to ensure all highways in the region are reviewed to ensure safe highways for all residents.

Adopted April 2014

Other

Cellular Phone Coverage

WHEREAS not all areas in Northwestern Ontario have cellular phone coverage; and

WHEREAS cellular phone coverage is now a universally, must-have technology that business, government, and emergency workers, in particular, need to operate efficiently; and,

WHEREAS tourists visiting these areas find it an inconvenience not to have service and are known to avoid some areas because of lack of service.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association call on the Federal and Provincial Government to provide funding to ensure that all areas in Northwestern Ontario have cellular phone coverage.

Adopted by the Membership: April 2011

Re-adopted April 2014

Changes to Federal Census 2011

Business, non-profit organizations, educational institutions and all orders of government use Statistics Canada's Census data to inform their policy decision making and program and service implementation. Much of the data is collected from the mandatory "long form" questionnaire which asked questions on issues such as work, education, housing, income, child care, migration, ethnicity, and family life. The Census "long-form" is a unique tool that provides decision-makers a rich set of facts about our communities and the citizens who live and work within them.

The Federal Government quietly eliminated the mandatory nature of the "long form" of the upcoming 2011 Census. Notice was provided in the June 26th Canada Gazette that this change had occurred through an Order in Council, without any prior consultation. In its place, a voluntary "national household survey" with detailed questions about ethnicity, income and education will be sent to one-third of homes.

NOMA is concerned with this decision because of its significant potential negative impact to our collective capacity to conduct reliable, accurate analysis of municipal issues. Issues and programs/services that could be affected:

- municipal funding,
- social assistance,
- immigration,
- health,
- poverty,
- economic development,
- training,
- education,
- housing,
- child care, and
- employment

WHEREAS a survey methodology that relies on voluntary responses will compromise the effectiveness of the data as evidence indicates that a significant portion of Northwestern Ontario will be underrepresented; and,

WHEREAS although the 2011 voluntary survey will be sent to more households (from one-fifth to one-third), the voluntary nature will make the data size and response unreliable and not to the accuracy required to ensure efficient and effective program delivery; and,

WHEREAS a lack of current, accurate Census data will be especially challenging in Northwestern Ontario where sufficient information has traditionally been less attainable, even with the previous mandatory collection system.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association calls on the Federal Government to reverse this decision immediately and return to the previously applied mandatory long form process for the 2011 National Census; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT a copy of this resolution be sent to the Prime Minister, the Hon. Tony Clement, Minister of Industry, all Northwestern Ontario MP's, and all NOMA District Associations and member municipalities asking for their support.

Adopted by the Board: July 2010

Re-adopted April 2013

Building Snowmobile Tourism

WHEREAS snowmobiling tourism is a significant economic generator for the province of Ontario with an annual economic impact of \$1.2 billion and contributes at least \$112 million in provincial taxes each year; and,

WHEREAS snowmobiling tourism is declining and facing a number of key challenges in Northern Ontario, resulting in a loss of revenues for Northern Ontario communities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association urges all stakeholders to work with and support community volunteers engaged in building snowmobiling tourism in Northern Ontario.

Adopted April 2013

Reinstate Katimavik Program

The Katimavik Program was established in Canada in 1977. Since that time, over 30,000 young Canadians have participated in the Program providing volunteer assistance to non-profit organizations. Over the years a number of Northwestern Ontario Municipalities have hosted and have benefited from the Program. Many of these valuable and beneficial projects would not have been possible without the Katimavik Program volunteers.

The Program provides further economic benefit to host communities, as statistics show that for every dollar invested in the Program, \$2.20 is generated in the community.

The Katimavik Program provides youth with the opportunity to travel and experience our rich, diverse Northwestern Ontario communities, while fostering cooperation, volunteerism, citizenship and leadership.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association petitions the Federal Government and the Ministry of Finance to re-instate the Katimavik Program in Northwestern Ontario.

Adopted April 2012

Family Medicine Residents in Small Communities (Northern Ontario School of Medicine)

WHEREAS at the inception of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, northern communities entered a process of community engagement with the Northern Ontario School of Medicine; and

WHEREAS northern communities depend on generalist Family Physicians to meet community health care needs; and

WHEREAS many of the northern communities are experiencing shortages of Family Physicians which is likely to worsen as those Family Physicians age and retire; and

WHEREAS the number of Family Medicine Residents coming to northern communities has significantly declined in recent years despite the commitment that northerners have made as communities to the School.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association petitions the Northern Ontario School of Medicine to ensure that Family Residents come to northern communities on regular rotations with the goals of encouraging both recruitment of new physicians and retention of current ones. This is in keeping with the mandate to help to meet the needs of our Northern communities.

Adopted by the NOMA Board: September 2012

Support for Funding Increases to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

WHEREAS the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation recently announced programming cuts in Thunder Bay; and

WHEREAS the reduction in programming will result in job losses and severely impact the delivery of regional news; and

WHEREAS the arts and culture community will no longer have an opportunity to showcase local/regional musicians, shows and other artistic and cultural events; and

WHEREAS CBC Thunder Bay will now receive its afternoon programming completely managed by CBC Sudbury; and

WHEREAS CBC Thunder Bay is the only station that is completely losing an entire radio show; and

WHEREAS CBC management justified the reductions based on population and did not account for the large geographical size of the Northwest or its unique sense of community.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT with respect to the shortfall in funding for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), NOMA urgently request an increase of Federal funding for the CBC;

AND THAT NOMA call on the CBC to cancel all planned staff and programming cuts at the Northwestern Ontario CBC station;

AND THAT the jobs involved in the delivery of CBC local and regional programming be retained in Thunder Bay and the region;

AND THAT NOMA communicate this resolution to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the President of the CBC and the M.P.'s and M.P.'s who represent Northwestern Ontario and in particular the coverage area of the Thunder Bay CBC ;

AND THAT this resolution be forwarded to all Northwestern Ontario Municipalities and to Chiefs of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Matawa Tribal Council, Northern Superior Chiefs and Grand Council Treaty 3 Chiefs.

Adopted April, 2014